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## MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** SHELLEY POTICHA, CENTER FOR TOD; VALERIE KNEPPER AND JAMES CORLESS, MTC

**FROM:** TIMOTHY ROOD AND ERIC YURKOVICH, CALTHORPE ASSOCIATES

**SUBJECT:** MTC TECHNICAL ROUNDTABLE SUMMARY – TASK 6B

**DATE:** APRIL 27, 2005

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This memo summarizes the discussion from two technical roundtables hosted by MTC and Calthorpe Associates. The technical roundtables included local planning directors and staff, transit agency representatives, and the regional CMAs for both the SMART and Dumbarton corridors. The SMART roundtable was held March 31<sup>st</sup> in Petaluma and the Dumbarton session occurred April 6<sup>th</sup> in Newark.

The purpose of the technical roundtables was to familiarize participants with the proposed MTC Transit-Oriented Development Policy study and TOD Guidelines and allow participants to comment on the initial performance measures, evaluation methodology, and station area issues. Additionally, the roundtable provided a forum for participants to ask questions about funding for Resolution 3434 station area planning and the role of Corridor Working Groups.

After a short introduction by MTC and the transit agency, Tim Rood from Calthorpe Associates presented the first of two presentation sections. Section one focused on the corridor-level performance measures proposed in the MTC TOD Policy, and section two focused on the station area issues assessed in Draft MTC TOD Guidelines.

### *Corridor-Level Performance Evaluation and Proposed MTC TOD Policy*

The first portion of the presentation began by introducing the population and the population and employment performance measures. The presentation described the four sets of figures (listed below) and methodology used to analyze each set of data to compare the performance of all case study corridors.

- Census 2000
- ABAG Projections 2003 (anticipated 2030 horizon)
- Generalized Planned Land Use capacity estimates (via ABAG)

- Center for Transit-Oriented Development estimates of TOD potential

At the conclusion of the data and methodology review, the results of the corridor-level analysis were revealed and described to the roundtable participants. In short, the SMART corridor needs additional development to meet the proposed thresholds which future projections show it can achieve. The Dumbarton Corridor already meets the population per square mile threshold but needs future development to reach the population and employment measure. Forecasts show this threshold is achievable.

Particularly along the SMART corridor, participants were concerned with whether the corridor could meet the thresholds in the future. Participants questioned whether ABAG and CTOD estimates exceeded the capacity of the General Plan capacity estimate. MTC staff offered to show participants the numbers on a station by station basis. Jurisdictions and MTC agreed to compare these figures to the station area data being gathered by local jurisdictions.

Dumbarton corridor roundtable participants also asked to view the numbers on a station by station basis. However, the participants seemed less concerned regarding how individual stations perform.

Though MTC and Calthorpe Associates staff stressed the proposed MTC TOD policy applied at the corridor level and not at individual stations, participants were primarily concerned with the results of the analysis in their station area.

One additional note on the corridor-level performance evaluations: Elijah Henley of the Sonoma County Transportation Authority offered to complete a future capacity estimate for Sonoma and possibly Marin counties. He suggested analyzing Sonoma County land use data for vacant and underutilized parcels and applying a build-out density to those parcels. These figures could be compared to the estimates presented by MTC and Calthorpe Associates.

Several other topics were discussed during the corridor-level dialogue.

In both sessions, participants discussed the role of the Corridor Working Groups. MTC staff advocated for the continued coordination of jurisdictions beyond this initial roundtable. Most jurisdictions agreed with this approach, but questioned what the future role of the working group should be, and looked to MTC for additional guidance.

Several suggestions for near-term tasks include:

- Comment on the overall direction of the MTC policy white paper, performance measures, and station area urban design guidelines.
- Evaluation and feedback on the population and employment evaluations completed by MTC and subconsultants.

During the Dumbarton roundtable, a discussion evolved, questioning whether employment density thresholds were the most appropriate method for evaluating corridor performance. Several jurisdictions articulated the need to measure not only jobs at the

new station areas, but access to regional jobs along the corridor. Modeling for the Dumbarton Corridor showed the greatest number of alightings at regional job centers in South San Francisco, Palo Alto, and Mountain View. These jobs would not be accounted for in the proposed MTC TOD Policy population and employment measure since the proposed policies will not apply to existing stations. Future model results for the SMART corridor will probably show a similar pattern, with a large number of commuters transferring to regional ferry service at the Larkspur Ferry Terminal.

Additionally, the roundtable stressed the appropriateness of certain types of employment within the station areas. Discussion followed at the Dumbarton Corridor session with at least one participant recommending MTC evaluate station area design to assess the type, format, scale, and block size of the employment areas.

During both corridor roundtables, MTC and Calthorpe Associates raised the possibility of translating population performance measures to dwelling unit measures. No participants objected to this translation and several commented it would be easier for them to count units rather than people.

#### *Station Area Issues and Draft MTC TOD Guidelines*

The second section of the technical roundtable presentation described several issues of concern for transit-oriented development that are being addressed in the Draft MTC TOD Guidelines.

Mr. Rood described the following issues in detail: station access, connectivity within the station area, connectivity to surrounding areas, mix of land uses, transit supportive land uses, and parking policies. These issues are not easily addressed by corridor-level performance measures or policies, so the MTC TOD Guidelines were designed to help jurisdictions with the preparation of station area plans. At this point, corridor roundtables began an open discussion.

Connectivity was raised as a serious concern in the SMART corridor. SMART parallels Highway 101 and significant portions of the area within a half-mile are currently not reachable in a 10 minute walk from the transit stop. MTC and Calthorpe Associates emphasized the need to link the transit stop to surrounding areas with better auto, pedestrian, and bicycle infrastructure. Many participants seemed comfortable with the notion of increasing station area access, and one suggested evaluating only areas reachable within a 10 minute walk rather than the area with a half-mile circle.

Both corridor roundtables discussed the topic of developable land within the half-mile circle. Several participants stated that a significant portion of the half-mile area in several station areas contained little or no development potential and should not be included in the performance evaluation. Station areas in Newark and East Menlo Park are covered in large part by wetlands while many stations along the SMART corridor have large wetland areas or are divided by Highway 101.

Several SMART roundtable participants pursued the topic of transit-supportive development. Participants questioned how jurisdictions could push for the appropriate densities and mix of uses before the SMART corridor begins the FTA New Starts application. One participant noted that many stations are in existing downtowns and jurisdictions already develop or redevelop parcels at transit-supportive densities and mix of uses. The Station Way residential development in Cotati was cited as a good example of transit-supportive densities.

Additionally, at least one participant suggested that intermodal station guidelines be included in the Draft TOD Guidelines. The participant mentioned the Mountain View Caltrain station as an exceptional example of local buses interfacing with a rail stop.

During the Dumbarton corridor roundtable, several participants questioned whether MTC's parking policies superseded the Dumbarton or BART station area parking policies. MTC staff explained the Draft TOD Guidelines address parking for all land uses within a half-mile of a transit stop, not transit parking exclusively.

This discussion sparked a general dialog regarding how MTC would use the Draft TOD Guidelines. MTC staff explained that while none of the TOD Guidelines are mandatory, MTC commissioners are considering including evaluation criteria for these three items: parking, large retail/block size, and affordable housing. These criteria could not regulate local planning decisions but could influence which stations receive Resolution 3434 funding for planning purposes.

During both technical roundtables, participants discussed how stations would be chosen to receive station area planning funds. Several jurisdictions articulated concern about achieving the performance measures and suggested station areas funding should be allocated to "underperforming" station areas. Jurisdictions along the Dumbarton Corridor suggested that the future Corridor Working Groups could be used to evaluate and identify "underperforming" station areas needing addition planning funds. During the SMART Corridor roundtable, it was suggested that if the jurisdictions showed a general redevelopment trend, those should be more likely to receive station area funding.

Several participants during the Dumbarton roundtable suggested money should also be allocated to high level performers or stations that exceeded the MTC thresholds. Additional station area planning funds would be used to promote good design, to increase station access, etc as articulated in the MTC TOD Guidelines.

As noted by MTC staff, station area planning funds under Resolution 3434 will not come from Regional Measure 2 allotments for transit projects. Station area planning funds will be allocated from programs such as the Regional TLC grant program in addition to RM2 funds.

One additional note on the Dumbarton Corridor: the corridor has begun the FTA New Starts Alternatives Analysis. The modeling will evaluate 3 new stations with an option for a forth between Willow Road and Redwood City using Projections 2003 data.